REMARKS

Claims 8-11 and 16-20 as amended above are currently pending in the present patent application. In an Office Action mailed 23 September 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 8-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,946,217 to Lhoest ("Lhoest") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,788,980B1 to Johnson ("Johnson"). It should be noted that although the Examiner indicates in the Office Action that claims 8-32 are pending, claims 12-15 where cancelled in a Preliminary Amendment filed 21 January 2004. Accordingly, only claims 8-11 and 16-20 are currently pending.

Amended claim 8 recites an assembly for electronically controlling the input of solution to multiple solution receptacles. The assembly includes a solution reservoir and a solution receptacle feeder attached to the solution reservoir. A computer is capable of generating an electronic signal having an address component identifying the solution receptacle feeder and an instruction component indicating a volume of the solution to be delivered to the solution reservoir. A transceiver is capable of sending and receiving the electronic signal.

With regard to the recited computer, Figure 1 illustrates one embodiment of a computer 120 that provides an electronic signal through transceivers 150, 160 to a solution receptacle feeder 110 which, in turn, provides a volume of solution to solution receptacles 115 a-h in response to the electronic signal. Figure 4 is a flowchart which illustrates in step 320 the determination by the solution receptacle feeder 110 of whether the address in a received signal matches the address of the solution receptacle feeder. When the address matches, the solution receptacle feeder 110 delivers the solution to the solution receptacle in step 340. In one embodiment, the solution receptacle feeder 110 controls the amount of liquid provided to each receptacle 115a-h as directed by the electronic signal or instruction from the computer 120. See page 7, lines 10-12. The amount may be controlled by controlling the degree to the receptacle feeder 110 opens an aperture, the time for which the aperture is opened, or through the amount of pressure the feeder exerts on the liquid. See page 7, lines 12-16. The solution receptacle feeder 110 may deliver a variety of different solutions (see, *e.g.*, page 5, lines 8-12) and the same feeder may be suitable for delivering liquids having varying viscosities, since the

aperture may be opened to varying degrees or for varying times to deliver the desired volume of liquid. See page 6, lines 1-4.

Neither Lhoest nor Johnson, whether taken singly or in combination, discloses or suggests a computer that generates an electronic signal having an address component identifying the solution receptacle feeder and an instruction component indicating a volume of the solution to be delivered to the solution reservoir. The Lhoest patent is directed to an installation or multi-story factory for transporting containers 210 of products that flow by gravity. The containers 210 containing products are transported to feed stations 110a and containers that receive product are transported to reception stations 110b. While Lhoest discloses generally the computerization of the disclosed system, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Lhoest of generating an electronic signal that identifies a feeder for filling a container 210 and that indicates the volume of solution to be delivered to that container. For example, in column 12, lines 10-22, Lhoest discusses a detection system to determine the type of product in a container 210. There is no disclosure in Lhoest of generating such an electronic signal to fill the containers 210.

For these reasons, the Lhoest and Johnson patents, whether taken singly or in combination, neither disclose nor suggest an assembly as recited in amended claim 8. The combination of elements recited in claim 8 is accordingly allowable.

Amended claim 16 recites an assembly for delivering solution to multiple solution receptacles including a solution receptacle feeder, a solution reservoir, multiple solution receptacles, and identification members affixed to each solution receptacle. A receptacle identification member sensor works with the solution receptacle feeder and a transceiver works with the solution receptacle feeder. A computer is operable to generate an electronic signal having an address component identifying the solution receptacle feeder and an instruction component indicating a volume of the solution to be delivered to the solution reservoir. A transceiver works with the computer.

Neither Lhoest nor Johnson, taken singly or in combination, discloses or suggests a computer that generates an electronic signal having an address component identifying the solution receptacle feeder and an instruction component indicating a volume of the solution to be delivered to the solution reservoir. The Lhoest patent does not disclose a system for identifying a container and then

generating an electronic signal including an instruction component indicating the volume of solution to be provided to a container. The combination of elements recited in amended claim 16 is therefore allowable.

Amended claim 21 recites a system for controlling the input of a liquid to multiple liquid receptacles. The system includes at least one liquid reservoir and a computer capable of generating an electronic signal having an address component and an instruction component including type information indicating the type of liquid to be provided and volume information indicating the volume of a liquid to be provided. A receptacle feeder is coupled to the computer to receive the electronic signal and is coupled to each liquid reservoir. The receptacle feeder is operable to provide liquid from at least one liquid reservoir when the address component of the electronic signal from the computer corresponds to an address associated with the receptacle feeder, with the volume and type of liquid provided corresponding to the volume and type information.

Neither Lhoest nor Johnson, whether taken singly or in combination, discloses or suggests a computer capable of generating an electronic signal having an address component and an instruction component including volume and type information indicating the volume and type of liquid to be provided. Neither do these references disclose a receptacle feeder that is operable to provide liquid from at least one liquid reservoir when the address component of the electronic signal from the computer corresponds to an address associated with the receptacle feeder, with the volume and type of liquid provided corresponding to the volume and type information. The Lhoest patent simply does not disclose a system for identifying a container and generating an electronic signal including an instruction component indicating the volume and type of solution to be provided to that container. Neither does Lhoest disclose a receptacle feeder that selects a volume and type of liquid provided to a container based upon the instruction component. Therefore, the combination of elements recited in amended claim 21 is allowable.

Claim 27 recites a method of providing liquid to a plurality of liquid receptacles. The method includes identifying a particular liquid receptacle to which liquid is to be provided and generating an electronic signal including an address component and an instruction component. The instruction component is a function of the identified liquid receptacle. The method determines whether the address

component has a particular value and when the address component has the particular value, provides the liquid to the liquid receptacle as a function of the instruction component.

While Lhoest discloses detection systems for identifying a container and thereby its contents, such as through optical reading, there is no disclosure or suggestion of identifying a container, generating an instruction component that is a function of the identified container, and providing liquid to the container as a function of the instruction component. In contrast, the Lhoest system identifies a container to determine the contents of the container and not to determine what to put in the container. While Lhoest discloses generally the computerization of the disclosed factory and Johnson discloses a control system that could be utilized to control most anything, neither Lhoest nor Johnson, whether taken singly or in combination, discloses or suggests the recited method of operations of claim 27. Accordingly, the combination of elements recited in amended claim 27 is allowable.

All claims dependent on the independent claims are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims, and because of the additional limitations added by the dependent claims.

The present patent application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the number listed below for a telephone interview if, upon consideration of this amendment, the Examiner determines any pending claims are not in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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